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THE OBSERVATOR.

Complaints against the Obſervator. *A Letter ſent him from the Iſle of* Wight. *Remarks thereon. A Drinking Bout in the* Burrough.

From **Saturday** February the 10th, to **Wednesday** February the 14th, 1705.

Obſ. WELL, Honeſt *Country-man*, any more News? What's the Talk of the Town?

Country-m. They don't talk very well of you, I can tell you that; I mean ſome ſort of People.

Obſ. Prithee, what do they ſay of me? Thou know'ſt I have a Back that has born many of their Lies and Calumnies.

Country-m. I have nothing to entertain you with, but Complaints and Reflections upon your ſelf; you have a long Time ſtood in your own Vindication. Here's more work for your Noddle.

Obſ. Prithee, out with it: I'll ſooner hear Complaints againſt my ſelf, than againſt other Men, let 'em be never ſo Malicious.

Country-m. Here's a Letter ſent you from the Iſle of *Wight*, and comes from one that I perceive knows you.

Obſ. Read it, Read it.

Country-m. By his Stile I fancy he's e'en ſuch another as *Roger*, your *Country-man*, and tho' he Reflects upon Maſter *Obſervator*, I will pardon his Country Simplicity, if he be of another Mind when you have Vindicated your ſelf. I'll read you his Letter.

Mr. *Obſervator*,

I Have knowne you for above 20 *Tears agon, and I tooke you to bee a prettey Honeſt Man; but now I find you to bee ſo much one your Mocks and Jears, that I now ſuſpect you to bee ſomething. Tow may remember, you heard once of ſom Honeſt Countrymen that took a* French *Ship Loaden with Salt, one the Coſt of the Iſle of* Wight, *I remember the Obſervation that you made upon it; that itt waſe lake a Cowes catching of a Hare: I took it then to bee but a comon Proverb verey uſeful with us, but I now find itt to bee a deeper matter then I expected; for I being att* Portſmouth *'tother Day, and being in Companey with ſom Friends, I thought could adviſe mee about itt, which Friends tould mee, wee ſhould certainely receive ſomthing for our Charge and Trouble, but their waſe one in the ſame Roome, I did not know him, neither do I deſier to bee acquainted with ſuch kind of Men; for this Fellow gave his Sentence without being aſked: That thoſe Men that did prettend to take any Ship of* France, *without Comiſſion ſo to doe, were beſt to bould their Toungs, for feare they ſhould bee Hanged for it; which I thaught preſentley he waſe one of your Gang, for it waſe like the Obſervation you mad upon itt att firſt; for if a Cow ſhould have the Fourten to catch a Hare, which is as unlikley as this thing waſe: If ſhee ſhould prettend to eate itt, it may perhaps Choke hir almoſt ſo ſoone as a Halter, may our Honeſt Men that are thus Condemned by this* High-Flyer, *which I hope that bee, nor no ſuch Men, will ever com to bee Judges in* England, *for I ſupoſe bee would bee as bad as Old* Jefferies: *I hope wee have more milder and better Lawes then their bee in* France; *and I doe not beare that St.* Paul *is like to be Hanged, or any thing like itt, for taking of ſo maney of our* Weſt-Idis *Fleet, ſo I hope wee may eſcape with Life: However, I declare, if I knew our Quine would have this Salt which the Maſter ſaid waſe* 50 *Tun att leaſt, I ſhould not begrutch my Labour, for then I hope our Honeſt Saylors would have their Meat better ſeaſoned, then formerly itt have bin: For my part, I had not enough of itt to put in a Mes of Milk for my Breakfaſt. Now, Mr.* Obſervator, *moſt Peopell ſayes you are a Conning R——, ſo I deſier you to adviſe us, whether there bee aney hopes to get a littel of this Salt for our Charge and Troubell; if itt weere but enough to Salt each of us a Hog, it would bee better then nothing, ſince Salt is now ſo very Dear; if you can adviſe us for the beſt, wee will make you Drink a Wike together of the beſt* October *wee have in our Iſland, with a Gamon of Bacon to Reliſh our Liquor, if you pleaſe to com here; as I have ſin you here ſeveral times, att Mr.* John Holliers, *att* Chillerton *Farm.*

Iſle of *Wight*, *Jan.* the 24th, 170⅘.

Obſ. I believe this Countryman of mine has had ſome Knowledge of me; but 'twas a long Time ago when I was a Stripling, and for ought he knows, ſince that Time I may have mended like Sower Ale in Summer; and I can aſſure him, I have been in Places and Countries ſince I left my own, where Honeſty has not been too much in Faſhion, nor too well Rewarded. However, ſince my Countryman deſires my Advice, I ſhall readily give it him.

As to the Story of the *High-Flyer* he met with at *Portſmouth*, I obſerve, from thence, in the firſt place, That that ſort of Vermin are diſpers'd throughout the whole Kingdom. 2*dly*, That they are alike Fools and Knaves in all Places. 3*dly*, That, like the Devil, they go about doing of Miſchief. 4*thly*, That they are no where believed; their Tenents being ſo Diametrically oppoſite to Truth, that the meaneſt Capacity can determine the Point, and this makes 'em ſo very Rediculous and Contemptible in all Places.

But, my Countryman ſeems to be frighted, becauſe the Iſlanders have taken a Ship without a Commiſſion. This is true *Tory* Talk, according to true *Tyrannical Principles*; and therefore, to encourage the Iſlanders, I'll tell 'em Honeſtly and Fairly how their Caſe ſtands.

In the firſt place they had a Commiſſion from themſelves; That is, they were impowered ſo to do, by the Inherent Right of *Natives* and *Engliſhmen* to defend their Properties and the place of their Nativity. For the People of the Iſle of *Wight* are bound to defend their Iſland, and to deſtroy their Enemies, tho' there were no King or Queen in *England*.

Secondly, They had a Commiſſion from the Queen

Queen and Government for so doing. Every Declaration of War is a General Commission, or Warrant to all the good People of *England* to molest, apprehend, destroy, or kill the Enemy, either by Land or by Sea: So that what the Islanders did, was in Obedience to Her Majesties Declaration of War: Now, Mr. *Quibus*, the *Jacobite* at *Portsmouth*, I find would have my Countrymen to be Pirates in this Action, and Hang'd for their Pains, as indeed the *Jacks* would have all such as do Service to their Country, or Mischief to the Enemy.

But the Islanders need not fear Hanging in this Case. Piracy is only in Times of Peace; when the Subjects of this Crown shall Rob *Super Altum Mare*, the Subjects of a Prince in Amity with the Crown of *England*; but the Laws of Nations allow *One Enemy to take from Another*.

Our Privateers or Capers take Commissions of Marque and Reprizal; not that they cannot Fight and take the Enemies Ships and Merchandizes without such a Commission, but for Reasons of State and Government, and in a great measure for their own Safety. For, according to the Law of Nations, that Commander who without a Commission shall attack another Ship, tho' in Enmity with the Crown of *England*, if that Commander be taken, he shall be esteemed a Pirate; but if he be not taken, and does return to *England* with the Ship he has taken, he is not esteemed a Pirate by our Laws, but the Ship and Cargo shall be Lawful Prize.

Country-m. If it be so, then your Countrymen are in no more danger than your Friend *Roger*, that never saw Sea-Salt-Water in his Life, unless the *French* should come and pull away their Island to *France*; for I fancy an Island is like a hugy great Ship in the middle of the Sea, only it has got Confounded hard Anchors. Well, I believe 'em pretty safe as to Life: But how shall they come at their share of the Salt?

Obs. I suppose the Ship is, or will be *Condemn'd* for the Lord *High Admiral*; for, if I am not mistaken, a Ship taken after that manner, is a Perquisite of the *Admiralty*: And tho' there is an Allowance to the Captors, yet many Times the share of the Prize is not worth looking after, as in this very Case.

The Letter says there was 50 Tun of Salt in the Ship. Now the Duties on *English* Salt is 3 *s.* 4 *d.* *per* Bushel, and the Duties on *French* Salt double that Sum, 6 *s.* 8 *d.* which Duties must be paid before the Salt can be Sold, which Charge, together with the Charge of *Condemnation* at *Doctors-Commons*, and Waiters on Board Ship, will bring the Profit of the Prize very low. I Question whether the clear Profit of the Salt will amount to above 50 *s.* or 3 Pounds.

Country-m. This 'tis for Men to go out of their Element: I'll warrant it my Brother *Gee-Whoe*, thought himself a fine Fellow when he had caught a Ship: He was going, I suppose, to set up for a Merchant, when he had better ha' been in his Barn, a Thrashing his Wheat and Peaten. 'Twould ha' been a pritty Jest if these Men had come up, to have told the Stones in the Admiralty-Court at *Doctors-Commons*.

Obs. No, no, my Country-men have more Wit than that comes to. However, if they get nothing by it, they have Acted like true *Englishmen* and good Subjects, and have done a considerable Service to the Publick by lessening the Wealth of the Enemy; and, I dare engage for 'em, if ever the *French* come to that Island they'll give 'em a warm Reception, without staying for a Commission; and if they are not much alter'd in 18 or 20 Years time, they are as Stout Men, and the best Disciplin'd of any Militia in *England*.

Country-m. Aye, but, Master, here lies the Grievance, the Hog, the Hog; I don't mean that Son of a Grunter, *Robbin Hog*; but the Hog and the Gammon of Bacon to relish the *October*. I love People that Drink *October*, and I am sorry these poor Fellows are like to lose a Merriment for want of Salt.

Obs. Never fear that, there's Salt enough just cross the Water at *Lymington*, on the Main Land.

Country-m. But they have a fancy to Salt a *Hog* with *French* Salt; tho' I should be glad to have *Robin* Salted with any Salt; I would fain have the Fellows Merry, methinks, let 'em Laugh and be Fat if they get no Money.——— Come, Master, here's to their Good Healths, with all my Heart, and the next time they go a Fishing for Ships, I wish they may catch a Whopper.

Obs. I'll pledge thee, tho' they call me a Knave.——— Hast any more Complaints against me?

Country-m. Yes, a whole bundle of 'em, but 'twill be too late to talk of 'em now.——— But I must tell you a sad Story. We must Drink no more Healths.

Obs. How so, Man? Is there any new Law a making against it?

Country-m. No, but your old Friend the *Assa-Fœtida* Justice, is going to *Dead-doe*, a Taylor, for Drinking a Health out of his Thimble. There is the most Horrid Noise of a Drinking Plot in the *Burrough*, tho like was never known.

Obs. Prithee what's the matter? What dost mean by this Story?

Country-m. I mean nothing at all; for, upon my Honour, the Story has neither head nor tail, tis a meer Monster, and won't be nam'd 'till *Friday* next.

Obs. Perhaps the People Drank some *Factious* or *Seditious* Healths?

Country-m. I can't tell that; but I am told they Drank a Health to the *Pious* and *Immortal* Memory of King *William*, after my Lord *Cutts*'s Fashion, with Huzzahs.

Obs. My Lord *Cutts* is a very Honest Gentleman, a True *Englishman*, and a Good Subject; and I shou'd imitate his Lordship as soon as any Body. Prithee what New-Fashion'd Health is it?

Country-m. Master, I'll show you; we are here pretty safe, the Squire of the Pestle and Mortar can't come at us. Now, Master, fill your Bumper of *October*. ——— Now extend your Arm with your Glass in your Hand.—— Look'ye now, Master, I fill my Glass and put it under your Arm, and over it again to my Mouth. ——— Here's a good Health to the Memory of the Great, Glorious and Immortal King *William*, who delivered this Nation from *Popery* and *Slavery*, whose Name is Venerable to all good Men, and hated by the *Jacobites* and *High-flyers*. ——— Now, Master, you must put your Cheek to mine, and so it must go round.

Obs. I can see no harm in all this; there must be more in it. Prithee make a further Enquiry.

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